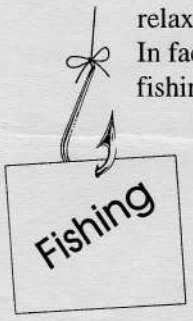
A Newsletter of

Turtle Flambeau Flowage Trude Lake Homeowners' Association

Winter 2000

Words from the President



Fishing is a great way to relax and enjoy nature! In fact, one can enjoy fishing even if the fish aren't cooperating. Myself, I'd rather fish than write an article for the newsletter! However, our secretary, Jim Leever, says it is one of the president's duties and there is a deadline. So, I had to quit fishing and do some writing.

First of all, let me thank Paul Gottwald for his work and leadership as our first president. He did a great job and I'm sure everyone appreciates the work he did. Thanks, Paul!

A lot of things happened this past summer. We continued the water quality testing program, checking dissolved oxygen levels, water clarity and worked on developing a temperature profile of the lake. As of October 10th, we have additional equipment, giving us the capability to sample for chlorophyll and phosphorus levels. Not only does the DNR use this information, it is also used by other groups and organizations for planning programs relating to water quality and in evaluating water protection grant applications and related projects. We receive annual statewide reports and summaries for our lake. These reports will be available on the Internet sometime in early 2001.

This past summer, a Turtle-Flambeau Flowage and Trude Lake courtesy code was developed, with help from the Namakagoon Lake Association. I would like to thank Tom Mowbray and Jim Leever for their help with the project. A copy is included with this newsletter. It is our intent to make it available at local resorts and businesses. We hope that it will help users of our lake appreciate and protect our great resource.

Thanks to Frank and Liz Kilgore for heading up a very successful Purple Loosestrife search. Also, thanks to those who conducted the search. There was some Loosestrife located in the Grant Creek area. Finally, thanks to Lynn Schlueter and the volunteers she recruited for this past spring's "Walleye Watch" at the Lake of the Falls spawning ground.

As most of you already know, there is a great deal of activity throughout Wisconsin relating to land use and water quality planning. The final result of this work will affect not only the land and water, but people as well. I hope everyone takes a serious look at what is being proposed and, whenever possible, get involved. Shoreland development, shoreland rehabilitation and restoration, water and land use, and wetland preservation are all part of this program. We will attempt to provide information in future newsletters.

With the above thought in mind, there is a great deal of information available on restoring shoreline and reducing erosion and pollution. Anyone interested may contact the DNR for more information. Also, hopefully, we may be able to have a couple of demonstration projects on our lake next summer to show what can be done by individual property owners.

Thinking about next summer reminds me, we sure could use a couple folks in the Trude Lake-Turtle River area to become self-help volunteers to do water sampling. It involves taking samples once a month. If you are interested, please let me know at 583-4491.

Hopefully, we will be able to organize an Iron County Lake Association so that we can have a closer relationship with the other lake associations in the county.

Another serious problem to address is the spread of exotic aquatic plants. Eurasian Water Milford is near the top of the list. Introduced into the U.S. in 1940, it was first found in Wisconsin in 1960. And, in 1971 there were 75 sightings, in 1998, 85 reports and in 1999, 319 sightings. Lakes with public access are most susceptible, and with each additional landing, the exposure multiplies. By 2002, it is projected that one in three lakes could be infected. We need to make lake users more aware of this problem so they will help control its spread.

If you have any suggestions that will help our lake or our members, let any of the directors know. Try to attend the annual meeting next spring (notices of time and location will be sent). To be successful, our lake association needs you. Volunteer! Get involved!

—Arlen Wanta, President

Welcome to Winter!

November

November is a month when the sun loses more than seven degrees latitude, and the days become an hour shorter than during October. The average Northwoods temperature drops 10 degrees and by the month's end, the days are only 9 hours and 30 minutes long.

Ready for the winter

The red squirrels have 2-4 bushels of spruce cones stashed away in a large pile known as a "midden." There may be as many as 13,000 to 30,000 cones stored in that hidden pile. The flying squirrel is a hoarder too, storing as many as 15,000 nuts during a harvest season.

Gray squirrels bury nuts, particularly acorns, singly, not in large caches, during autumn. They apparently find many of these hidden goodies later during the winter and spring by their sense of smell. Up to 85% of the buried nuts and acorns are recovered, but not always by the squirrels that hid them!

The chipmunk, like Silas Mariner, is a miser. It spends its winter on a mattress stuffed with food such as nuts, dried fruits and grain. The food pile is so high that it nearly touches the ceiling of a basketball-sized sleeping chamber. Since the chipmunk lacks stored fat, it awakens now and then to get energy-supplying snacks from its food pile.

Bears in their dens

Female bears have denned up for the winter. Many are pregnant or with their 10-month old cubs. Deer hunters may still see the male bears roaming through the woodlands.

A crazy moon

It's the month of the "crazy moon" — the peak of the breeding season for white-tailed deer. The moon is full on the 23rd of the month. The earliest that deer have been seen

breeding is October 5th and the latest, January 18th. However, wildlife managers have determined the average date to be November 19th. The presence of deer hunters has little affect on the deers' breeding. After chasing does, traveling long distances and eating poor food, a buck will lose 25% of his weight. When the breeding season has ended, bucks drop their antlers, retire to the woods and become shy non-aggressive critters.

Chickadees at the window

The hummingbirds who entertained us all summer are gone. Now it's time for the chickadees to put on their act. Many times there are 6 chickadees in a winter flock — generally the dominant pair that bred during the summer, their youngsters and an occasional stray.

December

Peace has come to the world of the white-tailed deer. The hunting season has ended. The breeding season is completed. The bucks who lost 20-40 pounds during the rut are losing their antlers, one at a time. The antlers, which are rich in minerals, are eaten by small rodents — porcupines, squirrels and mice. A few bucks will retain their masculine adornment until March, especially if they have adequate food.

Time for winter solstice

The winter solstice will occur on Wednesday, December 22nd. During the winter solstice, the earth's northern axis points the farthest away from the sun, and the sun's path across the sky is the lowest of the year, making for short days. However, we don't have the latest sunrise or the earliest sunset on the day of the solstice; the earliest sunset happens two weeks *before* the solstice, and the latest sunrise does not happen until early January.

Galloping Ghosts

Spruce swamps are the home of the snowshoe hare, the galloping ghost with satchel-sized feet. Together with ruffed grouse and white-tailed deer, the snowshoe hare is a symbol of the hardiness and endurance needed to survive a Northwoods winter. With its large splayed feet, the snowshoe can outrun anything in the winter woods. The only way a predator can catch him is by hiding in ambush. The snowshoe is a big eater, nibbling 10 ounces of bark daily. In proportion to his size, this is more than the food requirements for deer. The hare's food priorities are the twigs of aspen, white birch, spruce and balsam.

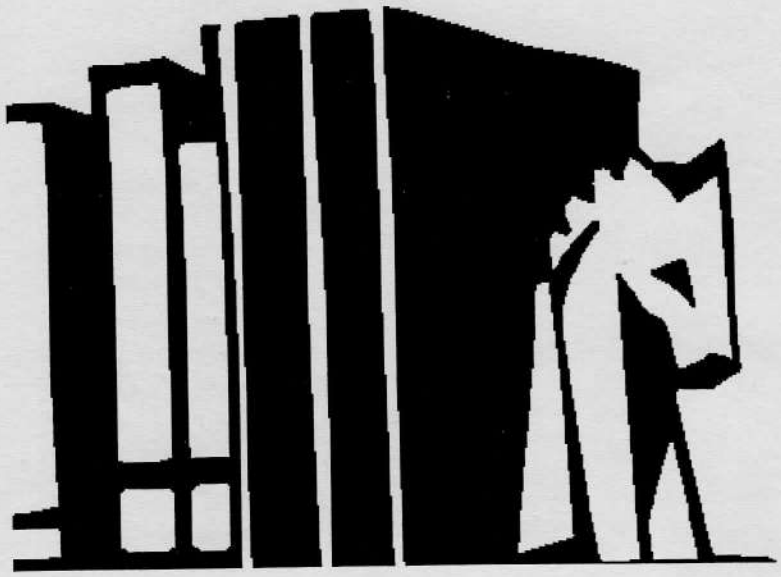
TFF-TL Homeowners' Association Mentioned in Fishery Report

Our Association was notably mentioned in a Department of Natural Resources publication, "The Fishery in the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage" (LF-020 Rev. 4/00). The ensuing text was seen under the heading *Partners*:

"..... The Turtle-Flambeau-Trude Lake Property Owners' Association is involved with a long-term water quality monitoring program. This is a substantial commitment of time and money towards the future health of the flowage and the fishery. The Association is also involved with Purple Loosestrife surveys and control efforts, and has taken the initiative to educate property owners about sound shoreline management practices. They are to be commended for their effort in encouraging wise development which preserves and restores shoreland habitats on lands adjacent to the Flowage.

"This year marks the first year Flowage property owners are assisting Law Enforcement in monitoring the major walleye spawning runs. Volunteers participating in this "walleye watch" were present at known spawning sites at various times of the day and night to deter potential poachers . . ."

Many thanks to the DNR for their commendation, and to our members for their hard work and dedication to the Flowage area.



The Secret of the Flambeau

A Book Review

by *Jim Leever*

He's no Harry Potter, but fifteen-year-old Tom Budd, H.M. Appel's hero in **"The Secret of the Flambeau"** will still take you on an exciting series of adventures and misadventures on the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage.

Published in 1936, the novel begins when a Hurley-based gang of smugglers threatens to kidnap Tom because his father, an Iron County District Attorney, is trying to prosecute them. Tom's father attempts to hide him with his friend, Al, who lives in a cabin deep in the Northwoods. He is introduced by his new protector, to a group of colorful Northwoods characters and is quickly befriended by them. Sharing in a rough camaraderie with his Northwoods friends, the story is an account of Tom's flight from the "bad guys," his capture, eventual rescue, and happy reunion with his father.

Though written for young people, the book is a fun read for almost all ages. What I found particularly interesting was the description of the Flowage as it may have looked in 1936, when trees still stood above the water. As near as I can determine, the book centers on an area that extends from the Springstead boat landing and east to the Flambeau River up to the point where the Bear River meets the Manitowish River. The story includes such familiar names as Hurley, the Sister Lakes, French Lake, and Boot Lake and features a boat called the "Log Jumper" uniquely designed to maneuver the navigational hazards of that time.

Given the time in which it was written, the book is a bit out of step with present day cultural norms, and lacks the ethnic sensitivity that would be expected if it were written today. But, that said, I found the 251 page story worthwhile and entertaining; it left me with a greater appreciation of the "Great Flambeau Flowage." *The Secret of the Flambeau* was loaned to me courtesy of Dennis O'Brien, Mercer DNR. Dennis informed me that the Mercer Ranger Station has a copy for loan, and that a limited number of individual copies may be available through the Internet.

Trumpeter Swan Update

Thanks to a great 1999, the state of Wisconsin met and exceeded its goal of having 20 pairs of trumpeter swans nesting in the state by the year 2000. The 30 pairs found represent a 67% increase over 1998, and at least 66 of the 80 cygnets hatched from the 30 nests have survived by the end of the summer.

Readers with Internet access who wish to follow the various state and provincial programs can go to **www.taiga.net/swans/links.html.** This is the web page of the Trumpeter Swan Society. The page has more than 50 links to sites with Trumpeter Swan information.

— Bird Watcher's Digest
September/October '00

Zebra Mussel Alert

Each year with an increasing number of out-of-town boats coming into the area, it has become important to stay alert to the possibility of zebra mussels migrating to the Flowage on the bottom of said boats. This barnacle-like invader poses a multi-billion dollar threat to North America's inland lakes and rivers, and public assistance in reporting zebra mussel sighting at new locations is essential to help prevent its spread.

The following is a description of a zebra mussel, and a directive should you find any:

How to identify a Zebra Mussel

- A zebra mussel looks like a small clam with a yellowish or brownish "D"-shaped shell, usually with dark and light colored stripes (hence the name "zebra").
- It can be up to 2 inches long, but most are under an inch. Zebra mussels usually grow in clusters containing numerous individuals and are generally found in shallow, algae-rich water.
- The zebra mussel is the **only** freshwater mollusk that can firmly attach itself to solid objects — submerged rocks, dock pilings, boat hulls, water intake pipes, etc.

What to do if you find one

- Note the date and precise location where the mussel or its shell was found.
- Take the mussel with you (several, if possible) and store in rubbing alcohol. **Do not** throw them back in the water.

Immediately call the Wisconsin Sea Grant Zebra Mussel Watch at 414-465-2795, the nearest Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources field office, or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

— Excepts, Zebra Mussel WATCH
The Great Lakes Sea Grant Network
UW Sea Grant Institute

August Purple Loosestrife Survey

The TFF-TL Purple Loosestrife Survey was done during the first half of August, 2000. All of the TFF was surveyed. The DNR said it would survey Trude Lake.

Participants in the survey were: Rod and Mary Ann Brown, Harold and Joan Clark, Frank and Liz Kilgore, Jim and Val Leever, Tom Mobray, Tom and Lynn Schlueter, Rick and Gigi Shukes, and Arlen and Grace Wanta.

Loosestrife was found near the mouth of Grant Creek. The DNR at Mercer was told and they clipped, pulled and used "Rodeo" on the site. Bruce Bacon said there were about two hundred plants and that it might take four years to eliminate the Loosestrife there. He also said that in past years, only one or two plants were found at other locations so this was a relatively large find. He also said that the Flowage was fortunate ***not*** to have a large infestation of the plants and that the Property Owners' Association has been very helpful in this regard.

In other areas of Wisconsin where there are large areas of Loosestrife, the State is going to use beetles (3 kinds) to control the Loosestrife. Research has shown that the beetles eat the Loosestrife and then die when the plant is gone. He indicated that more than an acre of Loosestrife was needed for the beetles to be effective.

Liz and I enjoyed our tour of the lake. We have been summer users of the lake since 1970 and were amazed at how many different red, lavender and purple shoreline flowers there are here. Also, we now understand the wisdom of having the DNR do the weed pulling. It would be easy to mistakenly pull all sorts of native look-alike plants that are what we want growing.

— Liz and Frank Kilgore

Walleye Watch

Association Members Participate in Spring Walleye Watch at The Lake of the Falls Spawning Grounds

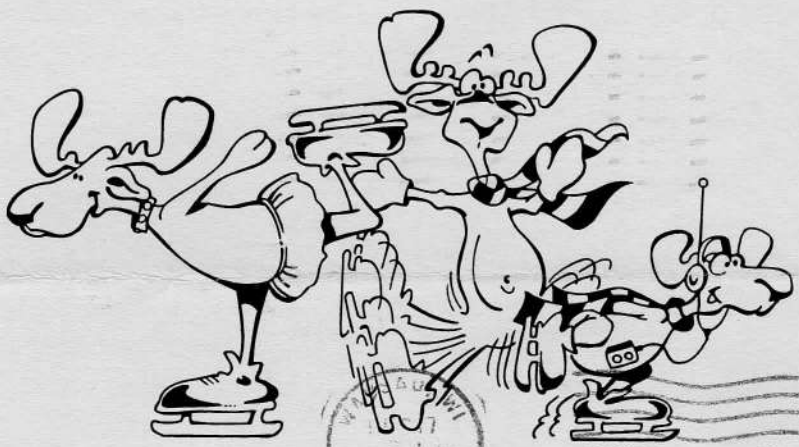
According to Lynn Schlueter, the Association's Walleye Watch Coordinator, Warden Stu Pfeiffer, was happy to see so many Association members and non-members answer the call for Walleye Watchers during last spring's spawning period at The Lake of the Falls. One of Lynn's neighbors actually reported to her, that he had a good time. Lynn thanks all of the volunteers she recruited. Through their efforts, the walleye that gathered to spawn along the shallow shores of The Lake of the Falls last spring, were safe from poachers.

The Association wants to thank Lynn Schlueter and all of the volunteers that participated in this very worthwhile project. We particularly want to thank Warder Pfeiffer for initiating and directing the project.

Ever hear of "Fair Diddles"?

Flying squirrels have been called "fair diddles." The Greeks called them the "gray mouse that flies." A flying squirrel can run straight up a wall and hang downward with one toe. They can't fly but they're great gliders. They have a flat tail, which, when landing from a glide, serves as a brake. There are two species of flying squirrels — the northern and southern. The northern is larger and more common to the Northwoods. Since they are strictly nocturnal, (visiting feeders at about 10pm) persons having fairy diddles in their backyards are often not aware of their presence. They generally nest in abandoned woodpecker cavities and during winter several may den up together to keep warm.

— Excerpts from "Northwoods Almanac"
a featured article by Ced Vig
Published in Northbound, Volume 19, Number 3



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